The motion is in order. Has the House any objection to its being discussed ?

No objection was raised in the House against the motion.

President : The motion will be taken up for discussion this afternoon at 3.30.

DEWAN-PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT RE : FOOD SITUATION.

President : I have to announce to the honourable members of this House the contents of a telegram that I have just received from New Delhi. "Regret, Central Provinces, Sind, Cannot Supply Your Requirements, Immediately. Madras Has Agreed to Give 15,000 tons Plus 5,000 tons On Behalf Of Bengal. Please Contact Madras."

We have already taken action on the latter portion of the telegram. But, as I foresaw in my address elsewhere, the needs of these Provinces on account of the unseasonal rains, cyclone and other catastrophe have also been very urgent and pressing. The Government of India are doing their utmost to help them, but as will be seen from the telegram, and as will be apparent from the fact that where Provincial autonomy is in existence, the Central Government cannot order, but can only advise. Incidentally, supplies cannot now be made to this country by any Province other than Madras.

The point, however, is this. Yesterday I asked honourable members of this House to meet the honourable members of the other House and consider ways and means for dealing with the situation ; and I have been apprised of the trend of the discussions. I understand that those discussions will continue to-day. But in view of what has happened, I may at once make a few observations which may shorten the discussions and enable honourable members to come to the assistance of Government by making concrete proposals.

The first point is that it is no longer possible for this Government to allow anybody the luxury of removing the price control. If it is suggested that the price of rice be raised and the agriculturists be allowed to make as much profit as the cultivators of pepper, ginger, tea and rubber, I do not think any feasible solution can be arrived at. I do not propose to deal in detail with the difference in the position of tea or pepper and rice. So far as human consumption is concerned, it is possible for man to live without tea or pepper. The question therefore, of any relaxation of price control is absolutely ruled out in view to the information that we have received. The question also of any system other than the Goverment control over every grain of rice is negatived. It would, however, be most useful for Government to get advice and also co-operation on the question of distribution. I shall deal with both

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[President.]

production and distribution. Two theories or methods are possible with regard to the collection of rice that is harvested by the various land-holders and cultivators. You may say, as Government have said till now, that Government will allow the Proverthicar or whoever is in charge, to make a computation of what is necessary for each family and the dependents of that family and for seed for cultivation, and take the rest.

Opinion has been expressed by certain honourable members of this House and the other House who have met me and by other non-officials who also have spoken to me, from which I find that there is a general impression that the Proverthicar may not always use his powers or jurisdiction equitably and that there may be bias, or partiality or differentiation. I do not mean to say that such a suspicion or such a feeling is wholly unjustifiable. The other alternative, and to my mind, the only other alternative, is this. Fix a sliding scale. People who know exactly what five acres in Kartigapally will produce can say that 10 per cent. of that production may be retained and the rest handed over; or 20 or 30 per cent. may be retained and the rest alone handed over; or they may fix a sliding scale, so that about 500 to 600 paras, let us say, should be the maximum to be retained. Everybody should hand over every grain of rice he has over and above that percentage. In other words, a sliding scale will be attempted by which every cultivator and owner of land will be given, arbitrarily, a percentage to suit his requirements and his requirements of seed. The advantages of this system would be that we know from the revenue documents what the yield last year and the year before the last was and what the tax paid was. And it is possible to strike an average for two or three years and each cultivator can be assigned his percentage. Only special individual hard cases need be taken for consideration. Supposing there is a family which consists of one hundred members and another which consists of two people, such hard cases as the former should be considered. That would reduce personal idiosyncracy to a minimum.

The Proverthicar, if he is a bad man, if he is viciously-minded, can twist the tail of everybody. The system that was till now comtemplated by Government was that with the assistance of the Local Committees, the Proverthicar should, so to say, indicate the necessity of each family, or the unit required for the consumption of each family and then require the rest to be handed over. I am suggesting as a possible alternative, in order to avoid the personal intervention, the personal investigation, or partiality or bias of the Proverthicar, a kind of percentage in a sliding scale to be fixed. That seems to me to be the only other alternative

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So far as distribution also is concerned, the question has to be considered whether the distribution should be done mainly by the committees or by the Proverthicar himself, or through certain non-official agencies or through licensed dealers. These are points on which Government are hoping to have assistance from you. It would be otiose and supererogatory to discuss anything more fundamental than that, having regard to the shortage that threatens. We cannot allow any person in Travancore to regard any rice or tapioca growing in the soil as the property of any person other than the public at large.

Non-official Business.

LEGISLATIVE BUSINESS.

THE TRAVANCORE TRANSFERS AND BEQUESTS TO UNBORN PERSONS BILL.

Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar: Sir, I beg to move that the Travancore Transfers and Bequests to Unborn Persons Bill be continued.

Mr. Kochikal P. Balakrishnan Tampi: I second it.

Mr. G. Narayana Aiyar: Sir, I also move, Sir, that as some of the members of the Select Committee are not now available to the House, the following members be included in the Select Committee :—

Messrs. 1. T. Krishna Pillai,
2. N. Krishna Aiyar.
3. P. R. Godavarma Raja,
4. V. Sankara Menon,
5. Mrs. Abernom Gnanasikhamoney, and
6. K. K. Kuruvilla.

The motions were put and carried and the six members were selected as members of the Committee.

THE TRAVANCORE KAMMALA (VISWAKARMA) BILL.

President: I think that it would be advisable for the honourable member Mr. M. Govindan to move his motion a little later. It has been the practice and the policy of the Government

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